



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION 10
1200 Sixth Avenue
Seattle, WA 98101

August 17, 2007

Reply to
Attn Of: ETPA-088

Ref: 06-082-FRC

Magalie R. Salas, Secretary
Federal Energy Regulatory Commission
888 First Street, N.E.
Washington, DC 20426

Dear Ms. Salas:

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has reviewed the final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the proposed **Spokane River and Post Falls Hydroelectric Projects** (CEQ No. 20070309) located in Kootenai and Benewah Counties, ID and Spokane, Lincoln, and Stevens Counties, WA. Our review was conducted in accordance with our responsibilities under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and Section 309 of the Clean Air Act.

In our comments on the draft EIS in March 2007, EPA expressed environmental concerns about degradation of water quality from the proposed re-licensing, and requested additional information on metal contaminants and sediment supply/transport in the project area. We recommended that the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) obtain the Clean Water Act (CWA) Section 401 Certification from the states of Idaho and Washington to assure that the states' water quality standards will be met. In addition, we recommended that FERC continue to work with the Spokane and Coeur d'Alene Tribal governments to address their water quality issues.

The changes made to the EIS between draft and final address most of our concerns. In particular, we are pleased with additional information provided in the final EIS, including updated 303(d) lists and numerous other revisions made to the EIS in response to public comments. Although the 401 certification conditions were not yet ready (p. 5-90) to be included in the final EIS, the document includes commitments to implement a Water Quality Monitoring Plan to address a number of issues, including minimization of total dissolved gas (TDG) and Dissolved Oxygen (DO) levels and temperature impacts. While this approach is promising, EPA continues to have concerns about impacts to water quality and encourages that accountability measures be incorporated into the 401 certification requirements and monitoring plans and that these be consistent with plans to attain loading targets in TDG, DO, Temperature and other pollutants of concern, such as metals, in existing and future water quality restoration plans for water bodies within the project area. As a result, EPA recommends that the Record Of Decision for this project include updated information about the Section 401 Water Quality Certification processes, including assurances that the projects' environmental measures would be adjusted to meet water quality standards in Idaho and Washington during implementation of the projects' operations in the next 50 years of their license.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this final EIS. If you have any questions, please contact me at (206) 553-1601 or Theo Mbabaliye at (206) 553-6322.

Sincerely,

/s/

Christine B. Reichgott, Manager
NEPA Review Unit

cc:

EPA Idaho Operations Office
EPA Washington Operations Office
Washington State Department of Ecology
Idaho Department of Environmental Quality
Spokane Tribe
Coeur d'Alene Tribe